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ABSTRACT

While many compensatory education programs have resulted in significant increases in achievement, few of these programs have been widely disseminated and/or adopted. Because designing, implementing, and evaluating programs is an expensive process, the failure to use exemplary programs results in a waste of resources. The problem is to reduce or eliminate this waste. This paper focuses on an exemplary program, the Response to Educational Needs Project (RENP), and addresses the problem of determining the most successful dissemination strategy for RENP through the use of cost information. It is held that the cost of operating the RENP severely limits the number of ways the program can be disseminated. Program dissemination strategies and costs are described, and the relationships between these are discussed. (Author/MC)

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RMC Report UF 327

RENP REPLICATION UNLIKELY WITHOUT FEDERAL SUPPORT

Donald D. Rogers

November 1977

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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CONTENTS

General Problems 1
Specific Problems 1
Description of RENP 2
Strategies for Disseminating RENP 2
Cost of RENP 5
Disseminating RENP 10
Summary 15
Bibliography 17

GENERAL PROBLEM

Since 1965 over $11 billion have been spent on the design, implementation and evaluation of programs aimed at increasing the reading and mathematical achievement of children from low income families. While many of these programs have resulted in significant increases in achievement, few of these programs have been widely disseminated and even fewer have been widely adopted. Even more surprising, many programs that were found to be exemplary are no longer in existence (see David and Pelavin, 1977, p. 13). Because designing, implementing and evaluating programs is an expensive process, the failure to use exemplary programs results in a huge waste of resources. Therefore, the general problem is to reduce or eliminate this waste.

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

This paper focuses on one, specific program--the Response to Educational Needs Project (RENP). This program has been operated for nearly ten years in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). The evaluations of RENP provide a strong argument that RENP qualifies as an exemplary program.[1] Therefore, the next step is to determine if RENP should be disseminated. If it should be, successful dissemination will depend on the strategy that is used.

The problem of determining the most successful dissemination strategy can be approached in a number of ways. This paper addresses the problem through the use of cost information. The basic premise is that the cost of operating the RENP program severely limits the number of ways the program can be disseminated.

The remainder of the paper is divided into four major sections. The first presents a description of RENP. The second reviews strategies that could be used to disseminate RENP. The third presents program costs.

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1. The results of the evaluations are topics of other papers in this series. The term "exemplary program" is used in a general sense. Formally, exemplary programs are usually considered to be programs that have been approved for dissemination by the Office of Education and the National Institute of Education's Joint Dissemination Review Panel. At this time, RENP has not been reviewed by this panel.

And finally, the fourth discusses the relationships between costs and dissemination strategies.

DESCRIPTION OF RENP

The Response to Educational Needs Project (RENP) represents an effort on the part of the Anocostia community of the District of Columbia to attack the reading problem at a community level. RENP, which is funded by the National Institute of Education, operates in grades 4 through 6 within ten elementary schools and in grade 8 in one junior high school in Anocostia. Although RENP emphasizes training teachers to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged, it also attempts to attack the reading problem on several fronts simultaneously including the classroom, the community, the home, and within specially designed reading laboratories. Salient dimensions of the RENP approach include:

- The use of Program Facilitators, similar to "Master Teachers" who are premanently based in a given school to provide training to all teachers in grades 4, 5, and 6, on a regular basis.
- Attempts to meet the individual needs of each client-teacher by diagnosing particular areas of strengths and weaknesses of each teacher through the administration of a comprehensive needs assessment and continued monitoring of each teacher's progress.
- The use of aids to work with individual students on specific reading skills, and who are capable of "taking over" the classroom when teachers are receiving training.
- Specialized training which is integrated into the normal work day and is not defined as "extra duty."
- While the training programs for teachers are individualized, all teachers are trained in the use of the "diagnostic-prescriptive approach" to the teaching of reading so they may better meet the individual needs of their students.
- The use of reading laboratories within each school to which students are sent on a regular basis to work on specific reading skills.
- The use of community organizers who work with parents and the community at large, providing information about the program, and helping parents to better understand how they can help their children's reading progress.
- The use of existing school curricula to improve reading skills. RENP does not stress "gimmicks" or special material. It seeks to help teachers better use material that is readily available to them.

STRATEGIES FOR DISSEMINATING RENP

A number of different strategies are used by the U.S. Office of Education to promote and disseminate exemplary programs. To simplify the discussion, these strategies will be categorized as four different approaches--the advertising approach, the contractor approach, the Title I approach, and the program approach. Although one or more may be used simultaneously, frequently only one approach is used for a specific program. Therefore, it is reasonable to isolate and separately discuss each approach.[1]

The advertising approach consists of simply distributing information about an exemplary program. This approach is currently being tried by Right to Read. Newsletters are being used as the advertising vehicle. Each newsletter contains information about several promising programs and is mailed to approximately 100,000 teachers and administrators in local and state education agencies. This approach attempts to increase awareness. Hopefully, a percentage of the people made aware of the program will decide to get more information and to eventually try the program.

The contractor approach goes a few steps beyond advertising. Under this approach, a competitive procurement process is used to award a contract to package, advertise, and market a program that has already been developed, implemented, evaluated, and found to be effective. In addition to the funds provided by the contract, the contractor may also receive a commission on the sale of materials to local education agencies (LEAs) that adopt the program. This approach draws on the strength of the free enterprise system. Hopefully, a contractor operating with a strong incentive will effectively market the program and ensure its dissemination. This approach is frequently used by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

The Title I approach consists of encouraging local education agencies to implement and support exemplary programs with funds provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This

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1. Theoretically, a fifth alternative is available. That is to disseminate RENP under grants from NIE. However, this alternative is inconsistent with NIE's basic mission and will not be considered.

approach is most frequently used for programs that were developed, implemented, and evaluated as a Title I project in a single LEA. After the program is found to be effective, other LEAs are encouraged to adopt or incorporate the program into their Title I program. This encouragement takes several forms and may involve personnel from USOE, state education agencies, and the LEA that initially developed the program. USOE may advertise or promote the program. SEA personnel may be encouraged to tell LEAs in their state about the program. The LEA that developed the program may host a conference about the program and encourage other LEAs to visit and observe the program in action. During this process both the quality of the program and the use of Title I funds to support the program are normally emphasized.

The Title I approach is used with the programs that are currently packaged and disseminated as Project Information Packages (PIPs). Not surprisingly, most of these programs were initially Title I programs. However, other programs also use this approach. For example, LEAs have been encouraged to implement and support Follow Through and Right to Read projects with Title I funds.

The program approach consists of obtaining and maintaining specific legislative support for a program. Initially, specific legislation is enacted to establish the program. After the initial year, the program is maintained by annual appropriation and authorization. Follow Through projects provide the best example of the program approach. Congress authorized Follow Through in December 1967 in amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. In recent years annual authorizations have ranged from $50 to $69 million. Administratively, Follow Through is a division within the Office of Education.

Initially, LEAs were encouraged to select and implement a Follow Through project or model. LEAs implementing a model receive any where from $300 to $1,000 per participating student to cover their operating costs. These funds do <u>not</u> cover all the costs of Follow Through. However, these funds are normally equal to or greater than the difference between the cost of Follow Through and the cost of the LEA's normal educational program.

The program approach provides all the resources necessary to ensure the dissemination of a project. The approach establishes a program office to provide the necessary leadership. More important, it also provides the resources required to implement and operate the program. LEAs may be given more than encouragement. If they wish to adopt a program, they may be given all the support they need to do it. Both the quality of the program and the ability to obtain it at no extra cost combine to form a strong incentive for adoption.

Four dissemination approaches have been discussed. All or any of the four could be used to disseminate RENP. Before discussing which approach is most appropriate, information on the cost of RENP will be presented. These cost data will then be used as a basis for selecting a dissemination strategy.

COST OF RENP

The annual cost of RENP is approximately $1.9 million.[1] Table 1 presents a summary of these costs. RENP currently operates 20 laboratories. Ten laboratories are used to train teachers in reading and ten to train teachers in mathematics. An analysis of the costs indicated that resources were split fairly evenly between reading and mathematics. Approximately $962,000 was used to directly or indirectly support the reading laboratories. The remaining $959,000 was used to support the mathematics laboratories. The average cost per reading laboratory was approximately $107,000. Each reading laboratory annually trained nine to 14 teachers with an average cost of $8,900 per teacher. The average cost per mathematics laboratory was approximately $87,000. Each laboratory trained nine to 15 teachers with an average cost of approximately $7,400 per teacher. Because reading and mathematics laboratories are operated independently, the cost of training in reading is independent of the cost of training in mathematics. Therefore, the cost of training

1. Detailed information on the cost and procedures used to obtain these costs are presented in Appendices A, B, C, and D.

Table 1

RENP COSTS BY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMPONENT

Component / Category	Reading	Mathematics	Parent/ Community Involvement	General Management	Total	Percent of Total
Administration						
DCPS	--	--	--	$112,419	$ 112,419	6
RENP	$ 71,712	$ 69,638	$123,416	209,984	474,750	25
Laboratories	535,240	533,950	--	--	1,069,190	55
Organizers	--	--	133,960	--	133,960	7
Subtotal	$606,952	$603,588	$257,376	$322,403	$1,790,390	93
Laboratory Space	64,439	65,430	--	--	130,860	7
Total	$672,382	$669,018	$257,376	$322,403	$1,921,179	100

a teacher in both areas is equal to the sum of the cost of training in each or equal to approximately $16,300.[1]

In addition to support through the RENP program, each class received approximately $34,400 of support through the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). This is equal to the amount of support normally provided by DCPS. The costs of both RENP and Non-RENP classes were analyzed. The results are presented in Table 2. The cost of RENP and Non-RENP classes are equal when the costs of the resources provided by RENP are excluded.

Table 2

AVERAGE COST PER CLASS EXCLUDING COST OF RESOURCES PROVIDED BY RENP[a]

Resources	RENP Schools	Non-RENP Schools
Personnel		
Classroom Teachers	$16,737	$16,494
Other Instructional Staff	4,379	5,013
Non-Instructional Staff	1,415	1,186
Administration	2,461	2,297
Facilities	6,343	6,343
Textbooks	31	110
Library Books	95	95
Supplies and Materials	421	470
Meals	1,718	1,751
Field Trips	415	465
Total	$34,265	$34,424

a. Using the school as the unit of observation.

1. These cost figures were computed using the assumption that all resources used by the RENP program were used to support teacher training. However, it should be noted that a portion of RENP resources were used to indirectly support training and other activities such as instruction. Because the focus of the RENP program is to increase student achievement through in-service training, joint product costing procedures were not used. Resources indirectly supporting training and other activities were considered only as indirect training costs and were accordingly allocated. This approach is consistent with standard managerial accounting practices and procedures (see Horngren, 1972).

This finding leads to the conclusion that the cost of a RENP class is simply equal to the cost of a normal class plus the cost of training the RENP teacher. Table 3 reports the results of using this procedure to compute the cost per RENP class. These costs are $41,800 for RENP mathematics, $43,300 for RENP reading, and $50,300 for a RENP reading and mathematics class. If the average class size is 25 students, then the cost per student may be computed by dividing the cost per class by 25.[1]

Table 3

AVERAGE COST PER RENP CLASS IN DCPS

Average DCPS Cost per Class	RENP Training Costs		Total Cost per RENP Class
	Reading	Mathematics	
$34,400	$8,900	$ --	$43,300
34,400	--	7,400	41,800
$34,400	$8,900	$7,400	$50,700

Table 4 reports the average cost per RENP student computed using this procedure.

Table 4

AVERAGE COST PER RENP STUDENT IN DCPS

Type of Class	Cost per Class	Students per Class	Cost per Student
Non-RENP	$34,400	25	$1,376
RENP Reading	43,300	25	1,732
RENP Mathematics	41,800	25	1,672
RENP Reading and Mathematics	$50,700	25	$2,028

1. The average size for RENP classes is approximately 25.3 students. Non-RENP classes were slightly larger.

The RENP program clearly costs more than Non-RENP. This difference in costs is called the incremental cost. The incremental cost is simply an estimate of how much more must be spent to operate a program. The incremental cost per student for RENP is reported in Table 5.

Table 5

RENP INCREMENTAL COST PER STUDENT

Type of Class	Cost per Student	DCPS Cost per Student	RENP Incremental Cost per Student
Non-RENP	$1,376	$1,376	$--
RENP Mathematics	1,672	1,376	296
RENP Reading	1,732	1,376	356
RENP Mathematics and Reading	$2,028	$1,376	$652

Although this section of the paper discusses the cost of RENP, its theme is that the cost of RENP limits the ways the program can be successfully disseminated. Therefore, the next step will be to compare RENP costs with typical educational expenditures. However, before these comparisons can be made, the RENP costs must be adjusted. A recent national study of the costs of Follow Through Projects (Rogers et al., 1977) found that the cost of operating a Follow Through Project is related to the cost of operating the LEA's normal, regular program. The cost of operating Follow Through increased as the cost of the regular program increased. This finding indicated the Follow Through costs were being biased by regular costs. RENP costs are probably also being biased in the same way.

In the Follow Through study, an attempt was made to remove the bias by adjusting costs. A simple adjustment was used. The incremental costs were computed. These were considered to be the best estimates of how much more an LEA spends when operating a Follow Through Project. Next, the national average cost per student was determined. This was considered to be the best estimate of how much an LEA spends on its regular program. Finally, an adjusted cost was determined by adding the incremental cost to the national average cost. This procedure removes much of the bias caused by local regular program costs. The RENP costs have been adjusted in a similar manner. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

ADJUSTED RENP COST PER STUDENT
(adjusted to the national average)

Type of Class	Incremental Cost per Student	National Average Cost per Student	Adjusted RENP Cost per Student
RENP Mathematics	$296	$1,284	$1,580
RENP Reading	356	1,284	1,640
RENP Mathematics and Reading	$652	$1,284	$1,936

Table 7 presents a comparison of the adjusted RENP costs with the average cost per student for public elementary and secondary education in each state. These data were obtained from National Comparison: Local School Costs (Market Data Retrieval, 1977). This comparison indicates that the adjusted RENP cost per student is greater than the average cost per student in every state except Alaska and New York. Furthermore, compared to the current, national average cost per student, adjusted RENP costs are 23 percent greater for mathematics, 28 percent greater for reading, and 51 percent greater for mathematics and reading.

DISSEMINATING RENP

Four alternatives for disseminating RENP were discussed in a previous section. When two of the approaches, the advertising and contractor are used, local education agencies (LEAs) are encouraged but are not provided funds to implement a program. These two approaches are not viable for disseminating RENP. This program is simply too expensive.[1]

It probably does not matter how effective RENP, it probably does not matter how well the program is advertised, and it probably does not matter how expertly contractors package and try to sell the program; LEAs will not implement it and pay for it with state and local funds. They cannot do it because they do not have the money.

1. This statement is based on the assumption that the RENP to be disseminated is comparable to the RENP that is operated in the District of Columbia Public Schools.

Table 7

AVERAGE COST PER STUDENT
(1975-1976)

1.	New York	$2,098.49
2.	Alaska	1,969.94
	RENP (mathematics and reading)[a]	1,336.00
	RENP (reading only)[a]	1,640.00
	RENP (mathematics only)[a]	1,580.00
3.	Oregon	1,573.99
4.	New Jersey	1,496.71
5.	Pennsylvania	1,477.00
6.	Maryland	1,465.31
7.	California	1,462.26
8.	Massachusetts	1,403.83
9.	Minnesota	1,381.82
10.	Vermont	1,380.68
11.	District of Columbia[b]	1,376.00
12.	Delaware	1,370.24
13.	Rhode Island	1,361.35
14.	Washington	1,337.32
15.	Michigan	1,335.18
16.	Wisconsin	1,328.21
17.	Montana	1,318,64
18.	Wyoming	1,308.84
19.	Iowa	1,298.61
20.	Florida	1,291.19
21.	Connecticut	1,287.03
	National Average	1,283.53
22.	Colorado	1,259.87
23.	Nebraska	1,213.40
24.	Missouri	1,207.85
25.	Virginia	1,189.42

a. Total adjusted RENP cost.

b. District of Columbia costs are costs of Non-RENP classes.

Table 7
(continued)

26.	Nevada	$1,168.69
27.	North Dakota	1,161.44
28.	Illinois	1,157.67
29.	Ohio	1,151.32
30.	Arizona	1,142.59
31.	Georgia	1,123.52
32.	New Hampshire	1,120.50
33.	Kansas	1,113.65
34.	Texas	1,053.52
35.	Utah	1,044.47
36.	South Dakota	1,017.98
37.	Maine	1,001.79
38	New Mexico	1,001.25
39.	Tennessee	992.43
40.	Indiana	991.03
41.	Louisiana	916.67
42.	Idaho	912.72
43.	Okalahoma	887.61
44.	Mississippi	846.72
45.	West Virginia	861.50
46.	South Carolina	846.92
47.	North Carolina	843.38
48.	Alabama	830.84
49.	Arkansas	760.96
50.	Kentucky	$ 732.06
51.	Hawaii[c]	

c. No data.

The financial problems of LEAs are well known and do not require documentation. However, the RENP costs can be placed in perspective by comparing them with costs in other areas. For example, the largest financial problem LEAs currently face is finding the funds necessary to provide the service mandated by Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Many LEAs cannot and do not provide the services required by this law because they do not have the funds (see Kakalik, 1977). However, the estimated cost per student for providing these services to the majority of handicapped children is less than the cost per student in a RENP mathematics class (Bernstein et al., 1976). Another problem LEAs face is finding the funds to provide salary increases demanded by teachers, administrators, and other personnel. LEAs that cannot meet these demands are frequently faced with another problem--a teacher strike. If the average DCPS teacher's salary is $16,500, then the cost of RENP training in mathematics for two teachers is equal to providing nine teachers with a 10 percent increase in salary and fringe benefits. The cost of RENP training in reading for two teachers is equal to the cost of providing 10 teachers with a 10 percent salary increase. Or, the cost of operating RENP for one year and training 233 teachers is roughly equal to providing 1,160 teachers with a 10 percent increase in salary and fringe benefits. Finding the funds necessary to maintain, heat, and light school buildings is another problem faced by many LEAs. Increased labor and fuel costs have dramatically increased the cost of physical plan operation. As a result, many LEAs have shortened the school year, closed schools during unusually cold weather, and closed smaller schools to decrease costs. These cost-saving tactics are generally as unpopular with educators as they are with parents. In the DCPS, RENP training in mathematics cost more per class than the cost per class for physical operation. Or, providing every classroom teacher in a school with RENP training in mathematics cost more than heating, lighting, cleaning, and maintaining the school.

The three preceding examples presented financial problems LEAs must solve with state and local funds. They have been presented to make a simple point. The cost of operating RENP is equal or greater than the cost of solving several other problems faced by most LEAs. Therefore, LEAs in this economic situation are unlikely to spend their funds to

operate a RENP program. Dissemination approaches that require LEA funds for RENP operation are equally unlikely to succeed.

The two other dissemination strategies, the program and Title I approaches, provide federal funding for program operation. These approaches are more likely to be successful simply because they provide funds. Although the program approach appears likely to be the most successful, it also appears to be the least viable. The success of the program approach is attributable not only to funding but also to the leadership and organization provided by the program office. The success of Right to Read, Follow Through, and Head Start reflect this leadership. However, the approach may not be viable because it requires specific legislation. Determining the probability of obtaining such legislation is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it should be noted that organizations such as the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the Council of Great City Schools are logical sources of support for a RENP program. On the other hand, colleges and universities that now play a major role in in-service teacher education are likely to oppose a RENP program because it does not include their participation. Even if the necessary political support can be obtained, the process of obtaining the legislation may be quite time consuming. After the legislation has been passed, another year may be required to establish a program office, write guidelines, solicit applications, review applications, award grants, and implement programs. In other words, even if the program approach is viable, several years will be required to implement it.

The Title I approach has many of the advantages of the program approach but also has it own disadvantages. Under the Title I approach, LEAs would be encouraged to implement RENP programs with Title I, ESEA, funds. This is consistent with the ESEA legislation, and LEAs such as St. Louis Public Schools and the Dallas Independent School District are currently using Title I funds to support in-service training programs. Because Title I grants are made annually, LEAs could apply for, recieve, and begin operating RENP with Title I funds as early as the 1978-79 school year. In spite of these strengths, the Title I approach has one glaring weakness, it does not provide for any organization and leadership. LEAs will

have to to made aware of RENP. If an LEA decides to operate RENP, it will probably require assistance planning the program and preparing the Title I, ESEA, program applications. Currently, the expertise necessary to perform these functions is found both among RENP project officers at NIE and RENP administrators in the DCPS. If either group can perform these functions then the Title I approach appears to not only be the best but the only immediate available alternative for disseminating RENP.

SUMMARY

For several years the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has been operating an educational program titled, "the Response to Educational Needs Project." This program's basic objectives are to improve the language and mathematical skills of children from low-income families. The strategy for achieving these objectives emphasizes increasing teacher effectiveness through in-service training. The philosophy is that improved teaching skills acquired through in-service training will result in higher student achievement.

The costs of RENP were analyzed to determine if program costs would prohibit the use of RENP by other local education agencies (LEAs). The results indicate that RENP is a relatively expensive program. The annual expenditures for each teacher are approximately $8,900 for training in reading, $7,400 for training in mathematics, and $16,300 for training in reading and mathematics. If each trained teacher instructs a class with 25 students, then the annual per pupil expenditure is increased by approximately $350 for reading, $300 for mathematics, and $650 for reading and mathematics. Implementing a RENP program in an average LEA would result in a substantial increase in the annual average cost per student for those students served by RENP. Compared to the current average cost per student, RENP costs are 23 percent greater for mathematics, 27 percent greater for reading, and 51 percent greater for mathematics and reading.

Because of the high costs of RENP, very few LEAs are likely to be either able or willing to support this program with state and local funds. Higher heating fuel costs, higher transportation costs, wage demands by salaried employees, general inflation, and costs of meeting the requirements of Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act)

have already created demands that cannot be met with state and local funds. In this economic climate, an expensive program like RENP is not attractive. Therefore, if RENP is to be implemented, funding must come from another source.

In the DCPS, RENP is supported by a grant from the National Institute of Education (NIE). Other LEAs who want to operate a RENP program will require similar federal support. Two alternatives are possible. The first is to establish a RENP program similar to the Right to Read and Follow Through programs. This would require Congressional support, new legislation, and establishing a new program office within the U.S. Office of Education. Although this alternative is viable, it does not offer an immediate solution. Several years may be required to obtain the necessary legislation. The second alternative is to encourage LEAs to use Title, I, ESEA, funds to support RENP. Not only is this consistent with the Title I, ESEA, legislation, but funds are immediately and readily available.

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